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Operation Our Town Reporter

a monthly newsletter by our volunteers to our volunteers about
our fight against drugs and crime in Central PA

Volume 1, Issue 10

October 2009

PUSH OUT THE PUSHER 693-3020



OperationOurTown.org

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Reliance Bank
Sheetz, Inc.
United Way of Blair County
Ward Trucking
Wolf Furniture

Committed Businesses:

Grainger Industrial Supply
Norfolk-Southern Foundation
Small Tube Products

Steering Committee Notes from Sept 21

Grant Committee: Grant applications for the Fall 2009 grant cycle were accepted until October 15th. A grant training is being planned for February. The next grant cycle, Spring 2010, begins in March.

Volunteer Roundtable: The RT chair recognized and expressed appreciation for the OOT volunteers that are covering the many October events.

Gang Roundtable: A gang training was conducted at the Bellwood-Antis School District and a Neighborhood Watch meeting. Presentations have also been made in New York, Chicago, and two places in PA. Two new members have been appointed.

Faith-Based Roundtable: The RT is in discussions with Contact Altoona to provide a single "prevention & recovery assistance" hot-line number. Catholic Charities reported a significant increase in calls for heating and housing assistance. The RT is researching a prison ministry program for Blair County. OOT will sponsor an inter-faith event in the spring at the Nehemiah Project to highlight all the good things that are happening in the area neighborhoods.

Marketing Roundtable: The RT is wrapping an Amtran bus with the OOT message, and is searching for a designer to donate their services. In the upcoming months, both WTAJ and Forever Broadcasting will feature Touched By Our Town stories.

Judicial Roundtable: The RT is working with the faith-based community to establish living quarters for offenders reintegrating into the community. CJAB is developing a dashboard report incorporating data from various courthouse departments to help quantify services provided.

K-12 Education Roundtable: The RT is meeting monthly, and has distributed OOT Push Out the Pusher materials and handouts to members. Other topics discussed include: Red Ribbon week, drug dog, PSP planned emergency drill, gang training, Keepin' It Real project, swine flu, and the Evidence-based Prevention & Intervention Support Center.

Human Services Roundtable: The RT reports some Blair Senior Services centers and Child Advocates of Blair County have closed due to the lack of state funding. The state cut the HSO budget by 24% for this year. The RT chair is also chairing the Alcohol and other Drugs workgroup for the Blair County Needs Assessment.

Law Enforcement Roundtable: Pete Weeks received an award from Blair Countians for Drug-Free Communities for his work prosecuting drug crimes. The RT chair spoke at the Police Memorial event in June and would like OOT to be involved every year.

Pharmacy Roundtable: The RT worked with law enforcement to launch the pharmacy Cops in Shops program. The RT has suggested that it might take legislative help to crack down on doctors who over-prescribe medications, which leads to some drugs being sold on the street.

Mission

Facilitating partnerships between community and business to fight drug use and crime through proven law enforcement, treatment, and prevention techniques.

Our Partners & Friends

Blair Countians for Drug Free Communities

Crime Solvers of Blair County

Pennsylvania Gang Investigators Association

United Way of Blair County

Volunteer Update

Volunteers play an important role in Operation Our Town. Volunteers participate in community events to help us reach more people. Volunteers serve on Roundtables, the Steering Committee & the Board.

Volunteers provide valuable services such as artwork & design, software development, and more.

We thank all our Operation Our Town volunteers. It is only through the support of active community members like yourselves that we will be able to take back our neighborhoods from illegal drugs and crime.

[CLICK HERE to register as an Operation Our Town Volunteer](#)



To serve on an Operation Our Town Roundtable, to become a Committed Business or to make a tax-deductible donation, contact Shawna Hoover by [email](#) or call 814-296-8730.

Upcoming Operation Our Town & Partner Meetings and Events

Wed. HOPE Support Group Meeting (weekly meeting)

7:00pm Blair Co Courthouse Jury Room

10/23—10/31 RED RIBBON WEEK

CELEBRATED NATIONWIDE

10/27 Red Ribbon Proclamation Signing

10:00am Blair County Courthouse

10/30 Wear Red to Work Day

All Over Blair County

10/31 Hollidaysburg Halloween Parade

6:00pm Jr. HS to Allegheny St.

11/02 BTW Revitalization Meeting

4:00pm Community Action Agency

11/07 Roaring Spring Fall Festival

11:00am Roaring Spring Public Library

11/09 Celebrate PA Promise for Children

1:00pm Altoona Public Library

11/12 Pharmacy Roundtable

7:15am OOT Office

11/12 Faith-based Roundtable

1:30pm The Nehemiah Project

11/14 Youth Fall Fest

11:00am First United Methodist Church

11/16 OOT Steering Committee Meeting

6:00pm OOT Office

11/17 K-12 Education Roundtable

11:30am Bellwood-Antis District Office

11/18 Crime Solvers Meeting

8:00am Park Hills Country Club

11/19 CJAB Meeting

11:45am Blair County Courthouse

11/19 Neighborhood Watch-County wide

6:00pm Blair Senior Services Bldg.

11/25 Blair Countians for Drug-Free Comm

8:30am United Way Resource Room

*OOT Meetings: For more information about Operation Our Town meetings, contact Shawna Hoover at oot@lsfiore.com or call 296-8730.

Drug deaths overtake traffic fatalities

Excerpts from AP article by Mike Stobbe, published 10/1/2009

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/33091645/ns/health-addictions/3>

- In 16 states, **drugs now kill more people** than auto accidents do.
- The shift reflects two opposite trends: Driving is becoming safer, and the legal and illegal use of prescription painkillers is on the rise.
- The **drug-related death rate roughly doubled** from the late 1990s to 2006, according to the most recent CDC data.
- The number of states in which drug-related deaths have overtaken traffic fatalities has gone from eight in 2003 to 12 in 2005, and 16 in 2006. They are: Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, **Pennsylvania**, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Oregon and Washington.
- While cocaine and heroin continue to be significant killers, most of the increase is attributed to prescription opiates such as the **painkillers methadone, Oxycontin and Vicodin**.
- From 1999 to 2006, death rates for such medications climbed for every age group. **Deaths from methadone alone increased sevenfold**, according to the CDC.
- In addition to its use as a treatment for heroin addiction, the opiate **methadone is increasingly being prescribed to manage pain**.
- Today, about one in five U.S. adults and **one in 10 adolescents** are prescribed an opiate each year.
- Using death certificate data for 2006, CDC researchers counted more than 45,000 U.S. deaths nationwide from traffic accidents, and about **39,000 deaths from drug-induced causes**.
- About **90 percent of those drug fatalities are sudden deaths from overdoses**, but the count includes people who died from organ damage from long-term drug use or abuse.

CDC report: <http://www.cdc.gov/NCHS>

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Upcoming Events

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Hollidaysburg Halloween Parade

Saturday, October 31
6 pm

Downtown Hollidaysburg
ROUTE:

H-burg Jr. HS—Allegheny
St—Phoenix Fire Co.

Roaring Spring Fall Festival

Kids activities and information for families.

Saturday, November 7
12 pm—5 pm

Operation Our Town
VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED!
Call 296-8730

Roaring Spring
Public Library
320 East Main St
Roaring Spring

PA Promise for Children

Information about programs offered to families with children.

Monday, November 9
1 pm—6 pm

Operation Our Town
VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED!
Call 296-8730

Altoona Area
Public Library
6th Ave & 17th St,
Altoona

Youth Fall Fest

Information on teenage suicide, prevention programs & resources.

Saturday, November 14
11 am—3 pm

Operation Our Town
VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED!
Call 296-8730

First United
Methodist Church
1208 13th St,
Altoona



Red Ribbon Week Activities

Friday, October 23 marks the kick-off of Red Ribbon Week in Blair County.

Red Ribbon Week, October 23rd - 31st, is a nationally recognized annual event calling all communities to unite and take a visible stand against substance abuse. During Red Ribbon Week, children and adults are encouraged to wear a red ribbon to demonstrate their personal commitment to a drug-free lifestyle.



This year, Operation Our Town joined with representatives from the Pennsylvania Elks State Association, Altoona Regional Health System, YTI Career Institute, Kids First Blair County, Bellwood—Antis School District, Hollidaysburg Area School District, area businesses and the community to support local schools in their efforts to celebrate Red Ribbon Week. Many Blair County schools, daycares and after-school programs have awareness activities scheduled during the week.

Red Ribbon Week helps educate children about the dangers of substance abuse and builds peer support against illegal drug use.

Students with Hollidaysburg senior high school's Tigers Against Alcohol and Other Drugs (TAAD) invite the community to participate in the high school's "wear red day" by wearing red to work on Friday, October 30. Parents are encouraged to check with their child's school or service provider for other planned Red Ribbon Week activities.

Additional activities coordinated by Operation Our Town include:

- PA Elks State Association, through the Tyrone Elks Lodge #212, donated over 3,000 red ribbons to distribute to local elementary schools.
- **Tuesday, Oct. 27:** Blair County Commissioners sign the Proclamation recognizing Red Ribbon Week in Blair County.
- **October 23 – October 31:** Red Ribbon Week at Best Way Pizza, 3026 6th Ave., Altoona. Receive a free soft drink with the purchase of a slice of pizza when you wear a red ribbon.
- **October 26 – October 28:** Red Ribbon Days at the Meadows in Greenwood. Wear a red ribbon and receive a free child's size cone with the purchase of an adult size cone.
- **Thursday, Oct. 29:** Red Ribbon Day at area McDonald's Restaurants. Wear a red ribbon and enjoy a free medium soft drink.
- **Friday, Oct. 30:** Blair County "Wear Red To Work Day."
- **Saturday, Oct. 31, 6 pm:** Look for the Elks' Drug Awareness Trailer and Red Ribbon volunteers in the Hollidaysburg Halloween Parade.

Organizers would like to thank the Blair County Commissioners, Pennsylvania Elks State Association, McDonald's Restaurant owners, Best Way Pizza, The Meadows in Greenwood, Lamar Advertising, and the local school districts and child care providers that promote Red Ribbon Week and a drug-free lifestyle.

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks' National Drug Awareness Program is the largest volunteer drug awareness program in the United States. Visit www.elks.org for more details. For information about the Pennsylvania Elks State Association, visit www.paelks.com, or call Tyrone Elks Lodge #212 at 814.684.1470.

Contact Info

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